

National American Indian/Alaska Native  
Head Start Collaboration Office



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2015-2020



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



## Table of Content

| Topic   | Page # |
|---|--------|
| From the Director   | 2      |
| Introduction  | 4      |
| The Work of the National American Indian/Alaska Native Collaboration Office (NAIANHSCO) | 5      |
| Strategic Planning Framework  | 7      |
| Commitment<br>Mission and Vision Statement  | 8      |
| Strategy Formulation<br>Priority Areas: Goals and Objectives                            | 9      |
| Implementation  | 13     |
| Dissemination & Sharing   | 13     |
| Evaluation of Project   | 14     |
| Addendum: Directory of NAIANHSCO Advisory Council                                       | 15     |

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## From the Director

Collaboration is a process of working together: communicating, sharing ideas and perspectives to maximize available resources. For American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS) and EHS/Child Care (ICC) Partnership grantees, this entails establishing and strengthening ties with community partners and early childhood education related organizations to provide needed support to AIAN children and families.

Formulating a strategic plan for the National AIAN Head Start Collaboration Office (NAIANHSCO) would not have been possible without the support and guidance of a group of dedicated individuals who represent various community partners and early childhood education related organizations on a national level. The American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start National Collaboration Advisory Council (NCAC) consists of individuals invited from a variety of representative entities (see NCAC membership directory in addendum to this report).

A heartfelt **thank you** to all the AIAN Head Start and Early Head Start grantees who completed the collaboration needs assessment, and to the National Collaboration Advisory Council, who provided valuable insight and developed a culturally-appropriate direction for this office!

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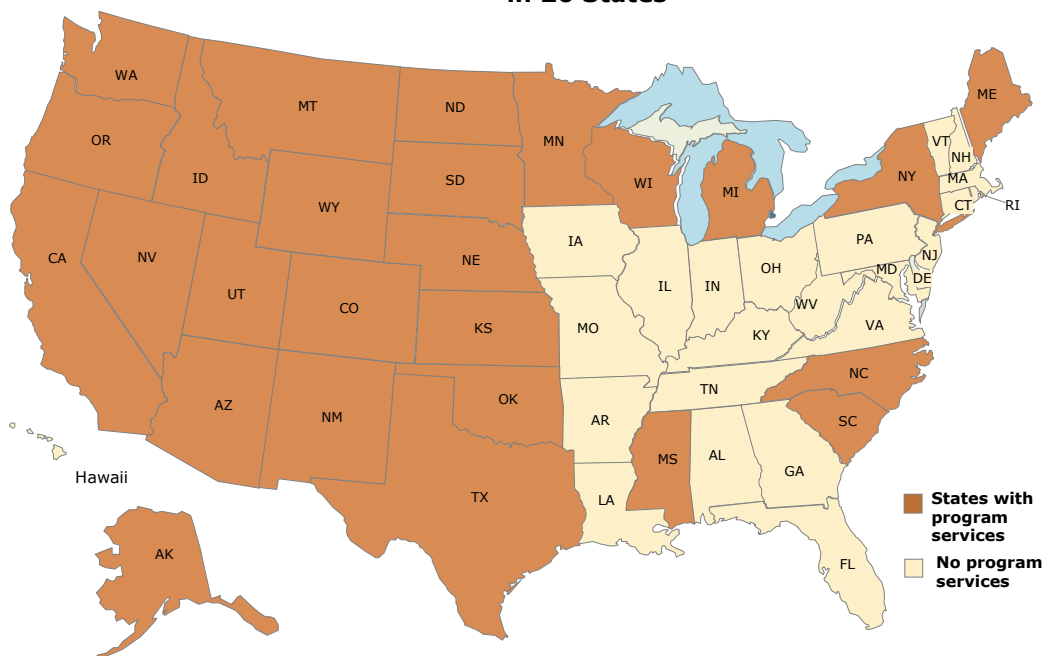
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## Introduction

The National American Indian Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office, created under Public Law 110-134 ("Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007"), is directed "to facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies (including Early Head Start agencies) and entities that carry out activities designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families." [Sec. 642B(a)(2)(A)]. Like the Head Start State Collaboration Offices, the NAIANHSCO works to identify potential partners for collaboration, communicates the needs of Head Start children and families, and, in a group effort, forms an alliance to provide appropriate support to Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Unlike the State Collaboration Offices, the NAIANHSCO strives to perform these tasks across multiple states and, due to the unique relationship that sovereign American Indian Alaska Native entities hold with the federal government, this includes developing relationships with offices and organizations that are national in scope (e.g., Indian Health Service; National Congress of American Indians; National Indian Education Association; Office of Child Care, etc.).

The NAIANHSCO serves 150 AIAN Head Start programs (163 grants among them). The breakdown of our grantees consists of 92 Head Start, 3 Early Head Start, and 55 Head Start / Early Head Start programs in 26 different states across the country.

**American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start  
in 26 States**



Map of United States highlighting those states that have AIAN Head Start programs

## The Work of the NAIANHSCO

**Scope of Work** - Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCOs) facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies and state, local, and tribal entities as charged by the Office of Head Start and the Regional Office.

- Partner with State Child Care Systems Emphasizing EHS-CC Partnerships

By partnering with child care through the EHS CC partnerships, this reinforces relationship building with state-wide agencies and services so all families are able to access many of the comprehensive services to support their child's healthy development

- Work with State Efforts to Collect Data Regarding ECE Programs and Child Outcomes

Head Start (HS) heavily invests in collection of data. This data can help inform states to better meet the needs of children (birth to school age) from families with low income. Without the HS data, a large part of the picture for young families could be missing from the state's planning process in meeting the needs of all families

- Support the Expansion and Access of High Quality, Workforce and Career Development Opportunities for Staff

Quality ECE depends on having a workforce that is well equipped with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to support the healthy development and learning of young children and their families. This goal is intended to provide support to grantees to enable them to meet the requirements as outlined in the Head Start Act of 2007 and the Head Start Program Performance Standards

- Collaborate with Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS)

QRIS is designed to provide a way for families to assess a program's strengths and make informed decisions to meet the needs of their family and child(ren). Including HS/EHS in QRIS allows for families to have the full picture of options available as they make decisions regarding the best alternatives for care for their child(ren)

- Work with State School Systems to Ensure Continuity

The partnership that HS Collaboration offices develop with LEAs and Pre-K programs help to build and support connections and relationships between schools, families, and classroom teachers, which in turn increases the likelihood of continuity between HS and K and up goals. The HS collaboration office can support this work through the statewide relationships that then translate to local grantees

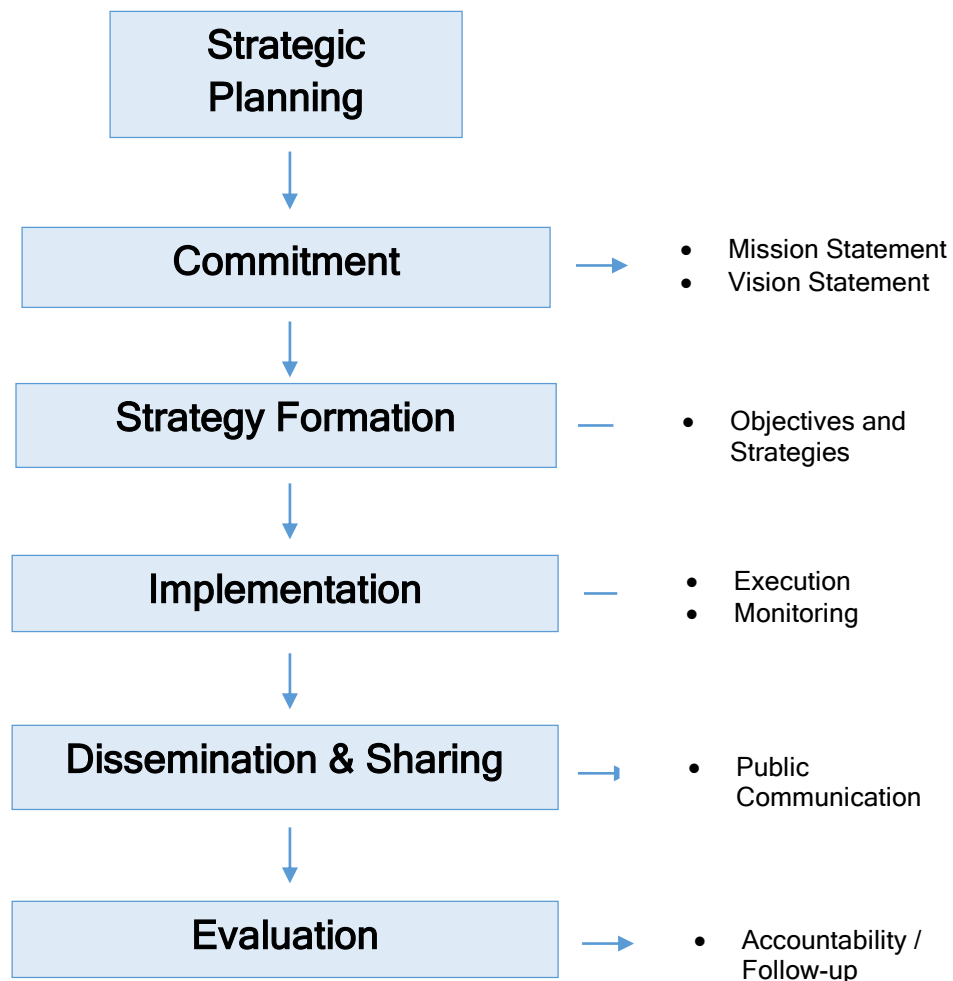
- Regional Priorities

This is an area where additional goals and results may be identified and tracked to meet more specific and evolving comprehensive needs in Regions and States. Some regions may choose not to add any additional priorities, but may fold in any comprehensive service needs as needed within the other 5 priorities

In the Head Start Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-134), the National American Indian Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office (NAIANHSCO) is required to conduct a needs assessment of National American Indian Alaska Native Head Start (AIANHS) grantees to determine the specific needs of programs and to develop a strategic plan based on the results of the needs assessment.

# Strategic Planning Framework

The 2015-2020 NAIANHSCO strategic plan addresses the broad conclusions and strategies of how the NAIANHSCO will assist and support AIAN HS grantees in meeting the requirements of the Head Start Act with respect to collaboration, coordination, and alignment of Head Start services in the areas of school transition, child care and early learning systems, professional development and regional priorities.



## Commitment

### **Mission Statement:**

The National American Indian Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office is committed to assisting Head Start grantees in developing collaborative partnerships to improve the quality of life for American Indian Alaska Native children and families.

### **Vision Statement:**

A commitment to collaborating to cultivate a strong educational environment for all AIAN HS communities by shaping the future while preserving the past through Native American and Alaska Native cultures, languages, beliefs and values.



## Strategy Formulation

The goal of the strategic plan is to guide the work of the NAIANHSCO for delivery of quality services in all priority areas established by OHS. The strategic plan goals will remain in effect during the five years of the NAIANHSCO grant; the objectives will be updated as the NAIANHSCO Needs Assessment is updated annually.

Years: 2015-2020

### Priority Areas: Goals and Objectives

#### Partner with State Child Care Systems Emphasizing EHS-CC Partnerships

By partnering with child care through the EHS CC partnerships, this reinforces relationship building with state-wide agencies and services so all families are able to access many of the comprehensive services to support their child's healthy development

- Objective: In conjunction with T/TA & National Centers, assist in the development of joint trainings on early learning initiatives.
- Objective: Support enhanced distribution of information between the Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI) and the EHS/CC Partnerships.
- Objective: Assist with the dissemination of tools and resources to the EHS/CC Partnerships in conjunction with T/TA, National Centers, Tribal Home Visitation, OHS, OCC and National Associations (NIHSDA, Northwest, Southwest, etc.)
- Objective: Promote EHS-CC partnerships among tribal councils and governments.
- Objective: Promote partnerships between EHS/CC partnerships and regional, tribal, & local entities responsible for supporting childcare programs in Head Start service areas.

## **Work with State Efforts to Collect Data Regarding ECE Programs and Child Outcomes**

Head Start (HS) heavily invests in collection of data. This data can help inform states to better meet the needs of children (birth to school age) from families with low income. Without the HS data, a large part of the picture for young families could be missing from the state's planning process in meeting the needs of all families (What about at our AIAN Regional level)

- Objective: Collect and share tribal protocols and agreements to assist with the negotiation of data use, sharing, and ownership between AIAN Head Start programs and state entities.
- Objective: Assist with the promotion of longitudinal data collection in order to show long-term benefits & accomplishments of tribal children.

## **Support the Expansion and Access of High Quality, Workforce and Career Development Opportunities for Staff**

Quality ECE depends on having a workforce that is well equipped with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to support the healthy development and learning of young children and their families. This goal is intended to provide support to grantees to enable them to meet the requirements as outlined in the Head Start Act of 2007 and the Head Start Program Performance Standards

- Objective: Continue to pursue, support, and mediate MOU development with Indian Higher Education Colleges and Universities.
- Objective: Collaborate with institutions of higher education to promote Early Childhood Education (ECE) coursework accessibility from accredited colleges/universities and ensure coursework credit transferability for AIAN Head Start grantee staff pursuing professional development opportunities.
- Objective: Work in conjunction with T/TA to provide development opportunities for both staff and management on the skills needed to support early childhood education and school readiness.
- Objective: Provide national, state, and local contact resources that can assist with professional development for AIAN programs.
- Objective: Promote the establishment of Native Language teacher training and certification programs with Tribal College language departments and teacher training programs.

## **Collaborate with Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS)**

QRIS is designed to provide a way for families to assess a program's strengths and make informed decisions to meet the needs of their family and child(ren). Including HS/EHS in QRIS allows for families to have the full picture of options available as they make decisions regarding the best alternatives for care for their child(ren)

- Objective: Review the QRIS in various states, as needed, and recommend appropriate and relevant elements/standards which allow for culturally appropriate practices.
- Objective: Work in conjunction with T/TA on the development of a tool that helps tribal programs meet QRIS standards without compromising sovereign rights.
- Objective: Facilitate the collection and dissemination of effective AIAN Head Start programs and processes in order promote an understanding of how to use the QRIS system.

## **Work with State School Systems to Ensure Continuity**

The partnership that HS Collaboration offices develop with LEAs and Pre-K programs help to build and support connections and relationships between schools, families, and classroom teachers, which in turn increases the likelihood of continuity between HS and K and up goals. The HS collaboration office can support this work through the statewide relationships that then translate to local grantees

- Objective: Promote alignment of systems between Head Start and Local Education Agencies (LEA) to ensure a smooth transition for Head Start children.
- Objective: Develop a model / template that supports a working relationship with LEAs
- Objective: Promote constructive, collaborative partnerships between AIAN Head Start programs and the local entities responsible for administering Pre-K programs in Head Start service areas.
- Objective: Promote partnerships to enhance parent involvement with transition between Head Start and Kindergarten.
- Objective: Assist with collaborative agreements between AIAN programs and schools as needed.

## Regional Priorities

This is an area where additional goals and results may be identified and tracked to meet more specific and evolving comprehensive needs in Regions and States. Some regions may choose not to add any additional priorities, but may fold in any comprehensive service needs as needed within the other 5 priorities

- Objective: Promote access and utilization of Indian Health Services (IHS) (medical, dental, mental health) for AIANHS children and families.
- Objective: Increase awareness of family literacy and family literacy resources among AIAN Head Start grantee programs.
- Objective: Increase understanding and cultural sensitivity around defining homelessness within the AIAN community.
- Objective: Work with various groups on the creation of a virtual roadmap for language revitalization that contains resources and instructions on what to do at each milestone.
- Objective: Facilitate the gathering of research briefs and findings around learning more than one language and coordinate with other organizations the development of a data warehouse of this material that can be accessed by the tribes.
- Objective: Assist with the dissemination of language revitalization resources to the tribes and connect them with higher education institutions that can assist them with their efforts.

## Implementation

The implementation of the goals and objectives will be detailed in the NAIANHSCO annual work plan. The work plan is organized into six areas: school transition/continuity, career development, child care and early learning systems, and regional priorities. The elements that delineate how the determined objectives will be met are: the cost to accomplish the objectives, the lead partners who will work in partnership with the NAIANHSCO Director to accomplish the objectives, the timeline for completion of those objectives, the resources available to the NAIANHSCO Director to accomplish the work, and the outcomes expected from the objectives.

The NAIANHSCO annual work plan is available upon request.

## Dissemination & Sharing

The NAIANHSCO 2015-2020 strategic plan update is publicly available to American Indian/Alaska Native communities as well as the general public.

The plan will be made available to AIAN HS programs, Head Start State Collaboration Offices, OHS Region XI, AIAN HS Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) and other community partners.

Information will be made available to the following upon approval by the Office of Head Start:

- AIAN HS community (including grantees and delegate agencies, OHS Region XI, National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA), AIANHS T/TA, Office of Head Start Collaboration Office, HSSCOs, and Head Start T/TA offices across the nation.
- The NAIANHSCO will establish a partnership list for continual communication with our partners and collaborators which will include, but is not limited to, members of the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council, task forces or forums that currently exist or those that may be established during the implementation of the three-year strategic plan.
- The NAIANHSCO 2015-2020 strategic plan update will be distributed electronically to the Office of Head Start and made available to NIHSDA, Regional Offices, AIAN HS T/TA, HSSCOs and community partners including the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council membership.

## Evaluation of Project

### Accountability/Follow-up

Objective: Monitor and evaluate activities for the five-year NAIANHSCO strategic plan for quality assurance.

Progress reports on the six broad areas addressed in the strategic plan: status of implementation, including progress toward each of the overall strategic goals, evaluation measures, and needed adjustments to plan.

Review of the strategic plan will be a permanent agenda item on the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council meeting agenda.

Changes to the five-year strategic plan will be made in collaboration with the NAIANHSCO Advisory Council.

### Key Questions for Monitoring and Evaluating Status of Implementation of the Strategic Plan

Are the established goals and objectives being achieved according to the established timelines?

If goals and objectives are being met, what are the driving forces/key strategies that help to make them happen?

If goals and objectives are not being met, what are the challenges or barriers identified that need to be discussed?

What resources, time extensions, and/or collaborations are needed to achieve the goals and objectives according to the timelines specified in the plan?

Does NAIANHSCO have adequate resources (funds, equipment, facilities, training, personnel, etc.) to achieve the goals?

Are the goals and objectives realistic?

Should priorities be changed to focus more on achieving goals that are more realistic after this evaluation?

Should the goals be changed? (Clearly define and understand why efforts to achieve the goals are not successful before changing the goals)

What decisions can be made from what we learned from the monitoring and evaluation process that will enhance the on-going implementation of the plan as well as improve future monitoring and evaluation efforts?



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